

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

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In re Patent Application of:  
Niel F. STARKSEN

Application No.: 10/656,797

Filed: September 4, 2003

For: **DEVICES AND METHODS FOR CARDIAC  
ANNULUS STABILIZATION AND  
TREATMENT**

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Confirmation No.: 7101

Art Unit: 3734

Examiner: K. Dowe

**AFTER FINAL,  
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE**

**AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL ACTION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.116**

MS AF  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Madam:

**INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS**

This is in response to the final Office Action dated March 11, 2009, for which a response is due on June 11, 2009. This response is filed within two months of the issuance of the final Office Action and therefore qualifies for expedited review. Accordingly, this response is timely filed. Reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims, as amended, in light of the remarks presented herein are respectfully requested.

**Amendments to the Claims** are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 2 of this paper.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin on page 11 of this paper.